

Case Study: John – Reframing Technology Through Curiosity, Connection, and Community at a Leonard Cheshire Residence

John, a service user at a Leonard Cheshire residence, has experienced a powerful shift in both daily life and social engagement thanks to the introduction of assistive technology—and, perhaps more importantly, the introduction of a team who helped reframe what that technology could mean. While John had already been using several devices on his own, including an older laptop, what changed was not simply **what** technology he had, but the **culture** around using it.

With support from the Assistive Technology (AT) team, John now benefits from a newer-model Alexa, a smart TV, a floor-mounted iPad stand, and a smart lamp. These tools are part of a larger shift that has made assistive technology a more visible, normalised part of daily life at the residence. For John, that visibility has meant that more residents are now using tech too, levelling the playing field and making it easier to talk about and share ideas. It's no longer taboo or isolating to be the “techy” one—instead, it's become a source of connection.

Previously, John encountered frequent frustrations when engaging with everyday tasks like using the television or keeping in touch with family. His older devices were difficult to use and left him feeling disconnected. But with newer tools and a team that understands how to personalise them, John's daily experience has changed significantly. He now uses voice and touch-accessible devices to stream content, control his environment, and video call with family through his iPad. These tools have helped him shop online, make art, and explore new technologies—re-energising long-held interests, including a renewed desire to experiment with eye-tracking to create digital artwork.

Importantly, John's growing enthusiasm stems less from the devices themselves and more from the collective shift in attitudes. Seeing fellow residents engage with assistive technology—some for the first time—has created a sense of shared experience and belonging. While John already had established social relationships in the home, this shared interest has helped strengthen them, deepening mutual support and collaboration with both staff and peers.

One of the most meaningful changes has been in John's confidence. He's always been a curious learner, but now he has more opportunities to explore, experiment, and troubleshoot using newer tools. His hands-on learning style and willingness to problem-solve has not only served him—it's inspired others. Staff regularly observe how John's excitement encourages other residents to give technology a go. When he demonstrates something new, his peers often feel more confident trying it out for themselves. His enthusiasm is contagious.

This growing sense of community has sparked new ideas for group learning and shared exploration. A playful afternoon has been planned where residents will try out different assistive technologies together—an event partly inspired by John himself. He's particularly excited about revisiting eye gaze art and hopes it becomes a regular part of their creative toolkit. The event will be a celebration of creativity, learning, and the joy of discovery through tech.

When asked to describe himself, John doesn't hesitate: he's a "problem solver." That identity is central to how he moves through the world—finding and testing his own solutions, and now helping others do the same.

John's story reminds us that inclusive, accessible technology isn't just about convenience. It's about culture, curiosity, and connection. With the right support, even modest interventions can unlock creativity, autonomy, and new pathways for disabled adults in care. Through his generosity, resilience, and joyful approach to learning, John has become more than a tech user—he's a catalyst for change in his community.

To find out about Leonard Cheshire's Assistive Technology programme, go to:

leonardcheshire.org/assistive-technology-leonard-cheshire